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INFANT MORTALITY:

ITS CAUSES AND REMEDIES.

Oh ! yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of Nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood.

TENNYSON.

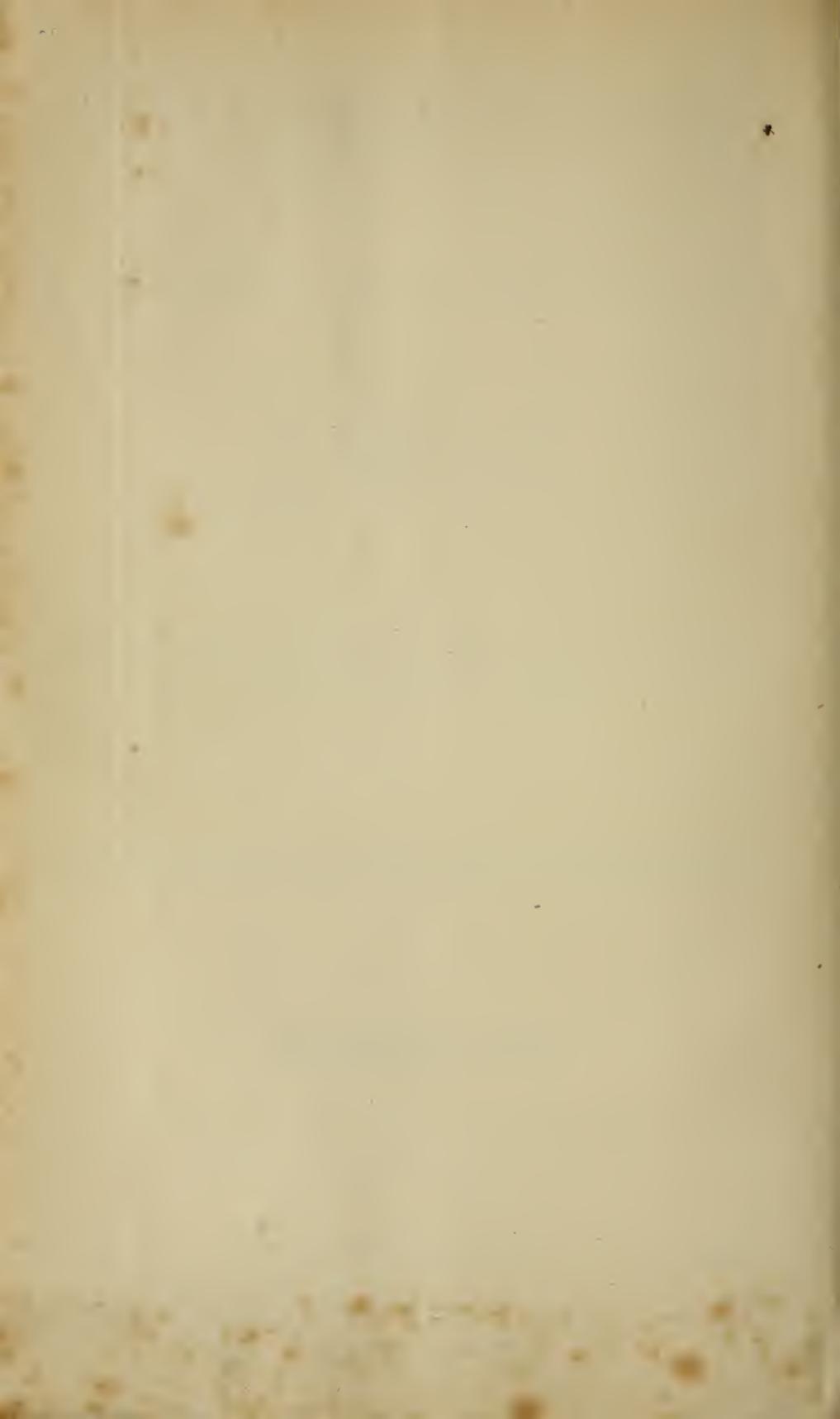
PUBLISHED FOR THE COMMITTEE FOR AMENDING THE LAW IN POINTS
WHEREIN IT IS INJURIOUS TO WOMEN.

[Copies for circulation may be had from the Honorary Secretary, Miss Wolstenholme,
Moody Hall, Congleton; to whom all communications should be addressed.]

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INFANT MORTALITY: ITS CAUSES AND ITS REMEDIES.

DURING the Session of 1871, the member for Salford, Mr. Charley, introduced into Parliament a measure, with the object of which, as set forth in its title—A Bill for the Better Protection of Infant Life—all good men and women must, and do, sympathise. Yet so far were these from adopting it as their own and lending it their hearty support, that many philanthropic individuals and societies received it with disapproval and distrust, and by their opposition to its provisions induced its author himself to propose that, before becoming law, the subject with which it dealt should be investigated by a Parliamentary Committee; which Committee has been engaged in collecting evidence bearing, directly or indirectly, upon the system popularly known as Baby Farming.

Some of those who avow themselves responsible for this postponement of legislation on a point so important, and demanding such immediate reform, feel that they owe it to the public at large, and to the House of Commons in particular, to turn the delay which they have helped to occasion to account, by setting forth and, if possible, establishing the principles which have governed their conduct in this matter. The following pages will contain a brief statement of the grounds on which we—the Committee for Amending the Law in points wherein it is injurious to Women—oppose Mr. Charley's Bill; the causes out of which, as we believe, the dangers to infant life arise, and the means whereby, in our opinion, those causes may be removed, or, at least, deprived of much of their force.

We object then to the Infant Life Protection Bill on three grounds :

Firstly, because it confounds together the women who take the entire responsibility of a child off the shoulders of its natural guardians, and those who only share that responsibility with one, or both, parents.

To the former, a system of voluntary registration and supervision may justly be applied, (except in cases of *bona fide* adoption, which ought to be considered apart and treated altogether differently), because it is beyond all question that, *if the child lives*, the sums paid with such deserted and, in most cases, illegitimate infants, are quite inadequate to their maintenance, by how much more then, to the remuneration of the nurse. So far, therefore, as legitimate baby farmers¹ can be placed under supervision, without thereby putting obstacles in the way of mothers anxious to conceal their connection with the children committed to the care of such nurses,—(all such obstacles having a tendency to increase the practice of abortion, or to substitute direct for indirect desertion and infanticide), we accept the principle of State responsibility for infant life, and are ready to lend our aid to any well-considered measure providing for the adequate fulfilment of this branch of national duty.

It is State interference with the second, and far away most numerous class of nurses that we oppose, and we believe that we shall be supported in our opposition by all who have any experience of the extent to which the practice of paying a neighbour to look after a child whilst its mother is at work, prevails in manufacturing towns and villages. We have ourselves a personal knowledge of districts where almost every married woman works in the mills, where, consequently, all children are left for many hours each day in the care of those who, from age or infirmity, are incapable of taking part in the industry of the place, and who most frequently resort to nursing to eke out the scanty allowance²

¹ In this pamphlet no criminal idea is connected with the word baby-farmer; it implies merely a woman who takes the entire and sole charge of infants, not related to her. Thus limited, the class will, we believe, be found to be a very small one, since it only includes the nurses of deserted children.

² It is needful that this point should be borne in mind, because, though the weekly payment of 2s. or 2s. 6d. with an infant is altogether inadequate to defray the expense

which they receive from relatives or the parish ; and we can judge, therefore, of the confusion and dismay which the Infant Life Protection Bill, were it to become law, would work throughout Lancashire and Yorkshire.

It is, indeed, urged that such confusion and dismay would be altogether uncalled for, since the licensing fee is so small, and the facilities for registration so great, that no woman who desires to act as a nurse will, by this Bill, be prevented from doing so, if only she can prove her fitness for the office.

Now, in the first place, we are satisfied that the licensing fee, small as it may appear, and the need of a certificate³ easily as it may be obtained, will debar many deserving, but poor women from continuing or undertaking the duties of a nurse. Looking to the smallness of the weekly payment made by parents with their infants, it is difficult to discover the margin out of which five shillings, or even half-a-crown, are to come, and the rooted aversion and distrust with which men and women of the working classes regard all meddling, clerical, medical, or otherwise is well known.⁴ We do not say that such dislike and

of feeding the child, and also to leave a profit sufficient for the nurse to live upon, where the absolute necessities of life are provided from other sources, she can gain out of it a trifle towards tea or butter, which form for her the luxuries of existence ; and because, in all such cases, it is inadmissible to point to the smallness of the sum paid with the nursegings as leading necessarily to their destruction.

³ It is difficult for the rich to judge rightly what constitutes, for the poor, a large or small tax upon their earnings. How is it possible for men who spend on a single cigar the sum which would provide a poor woman for a whole week with all the indulgences to which she ever aspires, or, with a single glass of rare wine, swallow down a sum equal to her entire means of livelihood for the same period, to pronounce, authoritatively, that a fee is moderate and one that she can afford to pay ? Take the licensing fee in this case as five shillings, and sixpence as the sum which the nurse would set aside weekly to be spent upon luxuries ; that gives us ten weeks, during which, in consequence of the proposed philanthropic change in the law, she would have to content herself with the barest necessities of life.

⁴ One of our committee lately visited a woman living in a silk manufacturing village in Cheshire, who has long been in the habit of taking in a baby to add to the little income which she draws from a tiny shop. This woman, one in whose hands any mother might safely trust her child, when told of Mr. Charley's bill, and brought to see that it would apply to her, remarked quietly, "I am fond of children; but, if that becomes law, I shall never take charge of another, and all my neighbours will say the same. Poor little things, it makes me sad for them."

Within twenty yards of the house in which this woman lives, a little girl of five years of age, who, about a year and a half ago, was most severely burned, was, to the knowledge of the same member, locked up daily alone from six in the morning till

suspicion are reasonable, only that they exist, and must be taken into account, in forming a judgment on the probable results of the proposed Bill.

But granting that no competent woman need be shut out from the care of children by the provisions of this Act, we still condemn it, on the ground that it imposes on the State an office which Nature lays upon the parents.

If there are to be officials to decide for the poor to what women they are to confide the rearing of their little ones, why not have others to choose the schools to which they are to send them in later years? The two cases are analogous, since the answer to be given in each depends upon whether or not the parents are to be held capable of understanding what is for their children's good, and loving enough to desire to promote it, when known.

It is not against the licensing of women as nurses, that we protest,—a bill empowering suitable authorities to grant certificates of fitness to all nurses who desire to possess them, and can show that they merit such a distinction, would command our support,—it is to the compulsion to be put upon parents to employ none but those holding such licenses that we object. The responsibility for the child in infancy, as in later life, lies with them, and we deny emphatically that the State has any right to dictate to them the way in which it shall be fulfilled. We hold that its function ought to be confined to the imposing of penalties for the culpable neglect of this, as of any other department of parental duty. If through indifference, ignorance, or wilful malice, parents place their infants in untrustworthy hands, and the child suffers in consequence, the law should punish them, equally with the nurse.

noon, and again from one in the afternoon till six, while the mother worked in the mill, food being placed on a table beside the sofa, on which the little creature, all swathed in cotton wool, was laid. In another village, near which the same member resides, a child of two years old, left in the charge of a sister of five, whilst the parents were at the mill, was burned to death, before the passer by, who heard her cries, could burst open the locked door to reach her.

In these cases, it was by the parents' deliberate choice, prompted no doubt by motives of economy, that the children were not left with a nurse, but such instances may be indefinitely multiplied if nurses are either not to be had, or only to be obtained with increased trouble and expense; unless, indeed, Mr. Charley and his friends contemplate offering to Parliament, simultaneously with their Infant Life Protection Bill, a measure to provide all parents with incomes, out of which they can afford to pay the five or seven shillings, without which, medical authorities inform us, a nurse cannot properly provide for the infants under her charge.

Let self-interest and a wholesome fear of penalties be thrown, by all means, into the same scale with natural affection, but beyond such precautions against their exercising their right to choose a nurse, carelessly or wickedly, the State should forbear to limit in any way their perfect freedom of action, in this as in all other matters connected with the rearing and maintenance of their families.

What would the ladies of England say, if some philanthropic member of the House of Commons was to bring forward a measure for licensing nurse-maids, and forbid them to employ any girl who could not produce such an official testimony to her competence? Yet in cases, and they are not rare, where the mother, absorbed in social duties or pleasures, leaves her children entirely to the care of servants, the need for such State interference may be absolutely the same. It is not alone the offspring of the poor who fall victims to ignorance or neglect, and unless Parliament is prepared to sanction the interference of the State in the selection of all persons to whom parental duties are to be deputed, it ought to content itself with imposing and inflicting punishment where such duties have been carelessly or culpably devolved upon incompetent substitutes, for it is of the essence of a just law that it shall be of so wide an application that none who violate its provisions shall escape its penalties.⁵

Secondly, we object to the Infant Life Protection Bill because by increasing officialism, police interference, and espionage, it

⁵ It is urged in favour of inspecting all nurses, that in the baby farms of the North of England, where children are only taken by the day, narcotics are so commonly resorted to as a means of quietening them, that an extra threepence or sixpence is charged weekly with each infant, where the drug is found by the nurse. The persons who draw from this statement a conclusion favourable to the inspection of all such nursing establishments fail, it seems to us, to perceive that it would equally warrant an inspection of all households in those districts containing children; for if the parents furnish the narcotics to the nurse, or pay at a higher rate that she may find them herself, the natural inference to be drawn from such conduct is that, had the child remained at home they would not have scrupled to drug it themselves.

The real remedies in this case are, firstly, to dispel the ignorance which leads thousands of men and women to regard opium as a legitimate cure for infant-restlessness and pain; secondly, whilst engaged in spreading the knowledge which will cut away the root of the practice, to put such difficulties in the way of people's procuring poisonous drugs as shall hinder their indiscriminate use; and, lastly, to make parents understand that, if the children whom they leave to the care of strangers are drugged and die, they will be included with the nurse in an indictment for murder or manslaughter, as the case may be.

tends to add to the already oppressive burden which the rate-payers have to bear, and to weaken in the community that sense of responsibility to conscience and to God in which virtue, national as well as personal, has its root.

On referring to the reply of the Infant Life Protection Society to a memorial of the National Society for Woman's Suffrage objecting to the proposed measure, we find it stated that there is to be only one Registrar at the central office in London, and that all other functions created by the Act are to be entrusted to the present parish medical officers. But whether exercised by old officials or new, fresh duties, we suppose, entail fresh pay.

Now, we cannot believe that, even in the case of deserted children, the license fees demanded from the nurses, and which, we are of opinion, they will often be unable to pay, can possibly cover all the expenses attendant on the proposed system, with the exception of the salary assigned to the Head Registrar in London; and if to them were added all legitimate children boarded out by the day, the number of inspectors, and, consequently, the cost of inspection, would be enormously increased.⁶

We would have it clearly understood that we have no desire to win over the ratepayers to our views by pandering to their often selfish and short-sighted dislike to any additional expenditure of public money. Every object that can be shown to be of imperative necessity, and incapable of due attainment by private effort, we are willing to see supported by the public at large, and that chiefly on economical grounds, because we know that for every pound required, but not spent, in preventing evils, the community, sooner or later, will have to give two, for their punishment or their cure. But believing, as we do, that the enforced inspection of children possessing natural guardians, is unnecessary and unwise, we feel ourselves authorised to take objection to the expense which such inspection would entail, and to bring this side of the question prominently before the minds of those with whom we know it will have weight; though we ourselves lay more stress on the other consideration. We are convinced that the whole community

⁶ The system, once fully established, we have a strong suspicion based upon the statements of medical men themselves, that the inspectors would soon find the five shillings fee an inadequate remuneration for their time and trouble, and strike for higher pay.

suffers by every attempt made to lessen the number of personal duties or the amount of personal responsibility. The moral faculties of man, like his physical and intellectual powers, grow and strengthen by use, and to diminish the force of the motives which impel him to exercise them, is therefore to run the risk of dwarfing and weakening the highest side of his nature.⁷

We cannot forbear from calling attention to the recent total and terrible collapse of that country in which officialism has attained to its greatest height ; a collapse which competent judges attribute largely to the helplessness and ignorance engendered by a political system which trusts nothing to the people and everything to officials. It is not the actual number of officials to be called into being by the Infant Life Protection Bill, nor yet the additional powers to be confided to them, which awakens our distrust, so much as the tendency to multiply the departments of life taken out of the hands of private persons to be given over to the State, manifested in this and many kindred proposals.

Believing, as we do, that social improvement, to be permanent, must spring out of an increased sense of duty, a wider knowledge, and a deeper love of right in the individuals composing the State, we have no hesitation in declaring that we shall invariably oppose every measure calculated to weaken individual responsibility and to restrict the objects which do or ought to call it forth.

Thirdly, we object to the Infant Life Protection Bill because it merely aims at removing the apparent and proximate causes of the fearful mortality prevailing among nurse-children, whilst it leaves the real and ultimate causes untouched.

Referring again to the reply of the Infant Life Protection Society from which we have already quoted, we find that it answers this objection, by falling back upon that great stronghold of men who object to all inquiry into first causes, all efforts to base legislation upon first principles, the argument that the facts are there, and being there, must be dealt with. Now, we by no means deprecate the importance of facts—indeed, we are specially anxious to ascertain and classify them ; but we look upon them

⁷ Those who have witnessed in private life the extraordinary influence exercised on character by the imposition of new duties and responsibilities, an influence so great, in the case of young persons, as almost to appear to create in them powers which they did not before possess, will be able to realise the force of the same argument as applied to communities.

as results of causes, as illustrations of the just application or the abuse of principles ; and we hold that the only successful way of modifying them is to investigate those causes and principles, and legislate upon the knowledge thus obtained.

“ Well, then,” say Mr. Charley’s supporters, “ bring in a Bill based upon a knowledge of causes and principles, if you like ; but why hinder us from passing a measure which will check infanticide, whilst you are seeking how to cure it ? It is the Bastardy Law that is in fault ; attack that.”

We are quite aware of the defects of the Bastardy clauses in the Poor Law, about which we shall, by-and-by, have much to say ; but we cannot agree to the proposal to allow one injurious measure to become law, whilst we are endeavouring to amend another. So far from checking infanticide and diminishing infant mortality, Mr. Charley’s Bill will, in our opinion, increase both. We also know by experience that legislating against effects tends to distract the attention of Parliament and the people from the causes out of which they arise. Having done something to lessen an evil, it is only natural that men should rest on their oars, or turn to the study of some other grievance, thankful that, for a season, there is one disagreeable subject at least which they cannot be called upon to consider. Yet this is a satisfaction that can only legitimately be enjoyed when the root of the whole matter has been reached, when the springs of evil have been dried up.

This brings us to the second point, on which we desire to lay before the public a clear statement of our opinions, viz., the causes to which, in our eyes, infanticide and infant mortality are directly traceable, leaving those to which they are indirectly traceable to be brought to light in the course of our investigation.

These causes, after long and anxious consideration of the whole subject, we feel justified in asserting to be :

1.—The ignorance and poverty of women ;

2.—The seduction of children and young girls ;

3.—The difficulty experienced by the mothers of illegitimate children in finding employment by which they can earn enough to maintain their infants and themselves.

1.—That most women are painfully ignorant, and wretchedly poor, is beyond dispute. There is abundant evidence to show that multitudes of men receive in childhood a most defective

education, sometimes no education at all, and can, in after years, with difficulty procure for themselves the barest necessities of life; and it is also well known, that both in the matter of education and in that of employment, the condition of women is worse than that of men.⁸ Take what class we may, the same sad truths stare us always in the face, that less money, less time, less thought, is bestowed upon the training of girls than upon that of boys; that fewer ways of gaining a livelihood are open to women than to men; and that for work done by the former, even if it be equal in quality to that done by the latter, the remuneration is usually less.⁹ Now ignorance and poverty are usually either the causes or the conditions of the sin of which infanticide and baby farming proper are the results. To the avoidance of evil, a knowledge of good is essential, and that knowledge is undoubtedly not instinctive, though the impulse may

⁸ From no employment are women excluded by law; but custom, the unwritten rules of Trades' Unions and professional guilds of every degree, and the regulations of governmental departments do, virtually, exclude them from many occupations for which they are naturally well qualified; and, in those from which they are not altogether excluded, they are admitted only to the lowest and least skilled departments, for which, by reason of the great fatigue and exertion undergone therein, they are physically least suited. In the same manner there exists no law enacting that girls shall be worse educated than boys; but their exclusion from a share in the educational endowments of the nation does really shut them out from all higher intellectual training, and we have ample proof that girls of all classes are expected to receive a worse education than boys, in the facts that in the Government Training Colleges less money is paid for the instruction of female teachers than of male; that in all schools a lower salary is paid to a mistress than to a master, and that some of our recently instituted school boards have, by their bye-laws, established a lower scale of fees for girls than for boys.

⁹ Extract from Mr. Dudley Baxter's tables, showing the earnings by classes of the men and women, boys and girls, in England and Wales.

CLASS IV.

Higher Skilled Labour and Manufactures.—Full Work: Average Weekly Wages.

Subdivision I.		Subdivision II.
Men	s. d.	s. d. to s. d.
Men	35 0	28 0 to 30 0
Boys	10 0	9 0
Women	8 6	9 6
Girls	6 6	6 6

CLASS V.

Lower Skilled Labour and Manufactures.—Full Work: Average Weekly Wages.

Subdivision III.		Subdivision IV.
Men	s. d.	s. d. to s. d.
Men	25 0	23 0 to 21 0
Boys	8 0	7 6
Women	9 6	10 0
Girls	6 6	6 0

be so, which, when right is once known, prompts to its performance; and numbers of girls are reared under circumstances fatal to the acquisition of any such knowledge, so far as personal purity and chastity are concerned; whilst the direct teaching of virtue which might, to some extent, counteract the evil influences with which from their birth they are surrounded, never reaches them at all.¹⁰

But it is not alone to moral ignorance that illegitimate births and infanticide are due, but also to ignorance of physical facts. Many girls are led astray without the faintest previous knowledge that the result of their weakness will probably be to make them mothers. The assertion is so terrible a one that our readers may well shrink from accepting it; but it is literally true, as we shall now proceed to show by passing to the consideration of the second cause to which we have attributed infanticide and excessive mortality among illegitimate infants,—viz., the seduction of children and young girls; and we know of no better way of vindicating the

CLASS VI.

Unskilled Labour and Agriculture.—Full Work: Average Weekly Wages.

	Subdivision V.		Subdivision VI.		Subdivision VII.		Subdivision VIII.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
Men.....	20	0 to 15	0	.....	14	0	.....	14
							6 to 10	6
Boys	6	6	.....	4	6	.....	6	0
Women ...	9	0	.....	5	6	.....	7	0
Girls	7	6	.....	4	6	.....	7	0
								12 0
								5 0

In analysing the preceding tables we find that they give the following instructive results:—

Firstly, that the average earnings of all the women of the manual labour classes in England and Wales amount weekly to 9s. 4½d.

Secondly, that a woman's weekly earnings are about three-fifths less than those of a man, whereas the weekly earnings of a girl are only one-fifth less than those of a boy.

Thirdly, that the proportion betwixt the wages of a woman and those of a girl is as 10 to 7, and that betwixt the wages of a man and those of a boy as 3 to 1.

The difference betwixt the possible advance of a boy's earnings and those of a girl is due to the fact that the latter is practically excluded from all branches of skilled labour, an exclusion which proves clearly that her industrial training is as neglected as her intellectual training.

¹⁰ We desire to record here our conviction that the circumstances which often place chastity beyond the very conception of the poor, are by no means equally fatal to other virtues. Patience, courage, longsuffering, unselfishness, flourish in the midst of physical filth and moral impurity, serving, by their presence, not only to vindicate the inherent nobleness of human nature, but also to impose silence upon those who would fain have us believe that in woman the capacity for goodness begins and ends with chastity.

soundness of our judgment in this matter, than simply to print and analyse a table furnished to us by the Rescue Society.

2.—TABLE OF THE AGES AT WHICH THE WOMEN AND GIRLS RECEIVED INTO THE HOMES OF THE RESCUE SOCIETY WERE FIRST LED ASTRAY.

Years.	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	Above 19	Total.
1861			1			4	1	11	11	36	64	78	81	60	41	85	473
1862			1		2	2	1	15	18	31	65	54	65	49	33	53	389
1863	1			2	2	10	3	29	26	47	63	63	48	37	24	63	416
1864				2	4	9	10	37	28	53	52	80	47	56	36	58	472
1865		1	3	5	16	11	61	46	61	59	94	63	58	25	44	547	
1866	1	1	5	7	12	7	73	29	60	50	90	53	56	32	62	538	
1867	1	4	3	8	14	11	68	35	53	57	58	70	42	34	56	513	
1868	1	3	2	6	19	15	47	30	43	69	66	56	34	36	48	474	
1869	3	1	9	17	12	31	29	41	60	78	64	37	30	59	471		
1870	1	5	1	11	16	8	49	29	42	52	91	94	55	37	61	551	
	4	1	19	17	54	119	79	421	281	467	591	752	641	484	328	589	4,844

It will be seen from the above table, that of the whole number of women admitted by the society into their various homes during the last ten years, the proportion of those seduced before attaining their nineteenth year, is to those who fell after that age, as four to one; that the maximum risk of seduction is run by girls in their seventeenth year, the figures falling in the following year from 752 to 641, and in the year succeeding that again to 484, whilst at 19 the risk has been reduced by considerably more than one-half. It is also worthy of note that, although, on the whole, the table bears testimony, column by column, to a steady increase in the numbers seduced, until that maximum is reached, yet there are two exceptions to the steadiness of this advance—a larger number of children being led astray at ten than at eleven; whilst at twelve years of age, the figures rise from 79 in the preceding year to 421, to fall, in the succeeding column, to 281, about the number which, had the rule of progressive increase been observed throughout, we should have expected it to show.

The conclusions to be drawn from this table, and from the kindred experience of the Homes of Hope and other societies, are that many girls are led astray in total ignorance of the ordinary results of sexual intercourse; and that if they can be shielded from temptation until sense and principle have had time to grow, and until experience has taught its lessons, the danger of their yielding to it afterwards is but small. That they are not so shielded is due in part to the helplessness and indifference of their

parents or other natural guardians, but in still larger measure to a cause which will shortly engage our attention, namely, the defective state of the law relating to offences against women and children.

The difficulty experienced by the mothers of illegitimate children in finding employment by which they can earn enough to maintain their infants and themselves requires no proof from facts and figures. Of two girls, the one of unstained, the other of tarnished character, both willing and anxious to work, it is certain that ninety-nine persons out of every hundred will, most naturally, give the preference to the former; and the demand for the labour of women, so limited are the branches of industry in which it is employed, being insufficient to absorb the supply, those who have erred are almost necessarily driven by the pressure of want to rid themselves of children they cannot feed, by desertion or murder.

Thus, that poverty¹¹ which, at the beginning of this investigation, we recognised as one of the conditions of seduction, and therefore as a remote cause of infanticide, and excessive mortality among illegitimate children, reappears at this later stage, as the

¹¹ In support of our belief that poverty is the almost invariable cause of the desertion of infants *by their mothers*, we will cite the last report of the Cumberland-street Home for Deserted Mothers and Infants. Speaking of the mothers who have gone forth to service from the institution, leaving their children in its charge, Miss Broughton, the author of the report, says:—"They all pay readily for them, and we have *never*—as it has sometimes been supposed we should—had an instance of a mother deserting her child." The italics are Miss Broughton's, not ours.

A paper published by the Committee of the Homes of Hope, speaking of the young mothers received by that society, says:—"In almost every case they have turned out well."

We are also authorised to quote from the letters of three ladies all possessing extensive knowledge on this painful subject, and each dwelling in a different part of England.

Miss Nicholson, of Devonport, writes that she has known cases of mothers who were brought by desertion, contemptuous treatment, and starvation, to the verge of madness, if not to a condition of positive insanity, but who, having been rescued and helped, now manifest such love for their children as to undergo very painful sacrifices for their sakes. It would be impossible, without breach of confidence, to describe the extent to which, in regard to infanticide, some of these poor mothers were tempted.

Mrs. Evans, of Stroud, states that there is scarcely any infanticide in that neighbourhood, yet the women seldom affiliate their children, partly because such a proceeding, by embittering the man, destroys their chance of marriage, and partly because, the labour of women being in demand and well paid, they can support them themselves.

Lastly, Mrs. Whitehead, writing from Rawtenstall, and referring to the upper valley of the Irwell, says, "No infanticide; work for women plentiful, their wages high." The connection between the two statements is obvious.

immediate, often the sole, motive prompting to the crimes of child murder and desertion.

We have said that children and young girls are chiefly led astray for lack of those external safeguards against temptation of which the young, of both sexes and all classes, stand equally in need, and we have assigned, as the ground for their defenceless condition, the helplessness and indifference of their parents or other natural guardians. Here again, the terms helplessness and indifference stand in reality for poverty and ignorance. He who is too poor to keep his girls under his own roof, but must, of necessity, send them forth, from their earliest years, to tread alone the lowest streets of our cities, the loneliest of our country lanes, or to pursue amongst companions of both sexes, and every shade of character, the occupation by which they contribute their mite to the household fund, is literally, for many hours of each day, helpless to protect them ; and he who has never learned the beauty and worth of personal purity, never been taught the responsibility which lies on him to preserve his children from every moral taint, will, as a rule, think little of the temptations to which his daughter may be exposed, and hardly more of her sin, should she succumb to them. And yet her salvation, physical and moral, depends upon her receiving that protection which he cannot afford her. How is this awful difficulty to be surmounted ?

We can discover but two ways in which it can be done—either we must place all parents in a position to give their daughters the instruction and protection which their weakness and inexperience demand, or else the State must devise measures to lessen the dangers to which girls are exposed.

The former alternative is, in the present state of society, impracticable, since no legislation can at once remove, or materially diminish, the existing mass of ignorance and poverty which crushes down many thousands of our adult fellow-countrymen to the level of the brutes ; though much may, perhaps, be done, by the infliction of penalties for culpable neglect of parental duty, to develop that sense of responsibility for their children's virtue which is so weak among the men and women of the poorer classes. We find ourselves, therefore, thrown back upon the latter alternative, and if, on examining the existing laws for the protection of children and young girls, we find that all has already been done

in that direction which it is wise or safe for the State to undertake, we shall be compelled to rank early seduction, with all its miserable consequences, as among the evils which, in our day, admit of no cure.

Anxious, therefore, on the one hand, to be able to show that there was room for great improvement in English legislation relating to seduction, yet, on the other, unwilling to be convinced that English statesmen could make and, up to the present hour, maintain unjust and unwise laws on a subject of such vital importance to the physical and moral welfare of the community, we began our investigation, and were soon at once relieved and shocked to discover that the special protection which the State, in this country, affords to its female subjects, ends with their twelfth year, and, after their tenth, is so slight as to be of little practical value. Briefly, it is a felony, by the law of England, to seduce a child under ten, a misdemeanour, to seduce one under twelve, yet the statistics of the Rescue Society already quoted, prove that the period of life at which girls are most exposed to dangers and least strong to resist them¹² is just that which lies betwixt their thirteenth and their nineteenth year. All mothers know that they risk corrupting their daughters' minds by opening their eyes too early to the dangers against which, as the law declines to protect them, they must needs learn to defend themselves. The age at which this knowledge may safely be imparted varies, of course, according to certain physical and moral differences; but, we think, most experienced mothers would refuse to sanction its being placed below sixteen.

It will, perhaps, be objected that, though it may be wise and right to fix sixteen as the age below which knowledge of the kind alluded to ought not to be imparted to young girls of the upper classes, it is absurd to place it anything like so high in the case of

¹² The latter cause has, probably, far more to do with the number of early seductions than the former. We see no reason, in the nature of the physical constitution either of men or women, why the temptations to which the chastity of the latter are exposed, should be less strong or numerous after eighteen than before, except in so far as the wider knowledge of life and the greater moral strength which comes to them with years, tend to discourage the former from attempts which they know will either fail, or, if successful, be still attended with more trouble; and, as it may be assumed that the chief motive impelling the seducer is personal gratification, not love for the seduced—for how is love compatible with subsequent desertion?—he is likely, as a rule, to prefer the victims whom it costs him least time and labour to sacrifice.

the daughters of the poor, the circumstances of whose lives must necessarily enlighten them, even if their parents do not; and that, as a matter of fact, the age at which the State has seen fit to withdraw its special protection from young girls, lies far beyond the limit at which most of them can plead ignorance in excuse for sin.

Granted,—but if the knowledge thus sadly acquired tends, by corrupting the child's mind, to render her more, instead of less, susceptible to temptation, more, instead of less, liable to err, does not this very precocity entitle her to a larger measure, a longer continuance, of State care and protection?¹³

It is a felony¹⁴ punishable with fourteen years imprisonment to allure a girl, *being an heiress*, from home, with intent to seduce, or even to marry her, without her parents' consent, below the age of twenty-one; it is no offence to seduce a child having no wealth or prospect of wealth, for whom character is the only passport to the employments by which she can hope to escape starvation, as soon as she has completed her twelfth year.

So incongruous, so monstrous does such legislation appear to us, that we are reluctantly driven to conclude either that, in the

¹³ "If your children had to hear daily the words which ours hear, and to see daily the sights which ours see, they would not be pure long; and you'll never have women honest till Parliament cares for girls till they get sense to care for themselves." Words spoken by a working woman to a member of our committee.

¹⁴ 24 and 25 Vict., c. 100, clause 53:—"Where any woman of any age shall have any interest, whether legal or equitable, present or future, absolute, conditional, or contingent, in any real or personal estate, or shall be a presumptive heiress or coheiress, or presumptive next of kin, or one of the presumptive next of kin to any one having such interest, whosoever shall, from motives of lucre, take away or detain such woman against her will, with intent to marry or carnally know her, or to cause her to be married or carnally known by any other person, and whosoever shall fraudulently allure, take away, or detain such woman, being under the age of twenty-one years, out of the possession and against the will of her father or mother, or of any other person having the lawful care or charge of her, with intent to marry or carnally know her, or to cause her to be married or carnally known by any other person, shall be guilty of felony, and being convicted thereof, shall be liable, at the discretion of the Court, to be kept in penal servitude for any term not exceeding fourteen years, and not less than three years, or to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding two years, with or without hard labour; and whosoever shall be convicted of any offence against this section shall be incapable of taking any estate or interest, legal or equitable, in any real or personal property of such woman, or in which she shall have any such interest, or which shall come to her as such heiress, coheiress, or next of kin as aforesaid, and if any such marriage as aforesaid shall have taken place, such property shall, upon such conviction, be settled in such manner as the Court of Chancery in England or Ireland shall, upon any information at the suit of the Attorney General appoint."

case of the daughters of the poor, the law relating to seduction does not desire to prevent the wrong, but simply to defer it until children have undergone certain constitutional changes, or else that its authors were ignorant of the most common facts concerning the physical and moral nature of women, and consequently unfit for the difficult and delicate task of legislating for them.

That men of brutal instincts put the former interpretation upon that law, regarding it rather in the light of a license than of a prohibition, is sufficiently proved by the significant figures to which we drew attention when analysing the table furnished to us by the Rescue Society.

At 9 years old, 54 children were led astray, (we are really at a loss to know what word to employ, all those that imply blame to the victim appearing to us entirely out of place); at 10, when the offence ceases to be felony, 119; at 11, 79 were sacrificed, at 12, when their last defence is withdrawn, 421; from which terrible figures we draw two inferences, more terrible still: the first, that there are men, who, knowing the law, deliberately wait to indulge their passions till the hour when they can do so with diminished risk or total impunity; the second, that the violators of these little ones must be persons standing towards them in positions of trust, near relatives, guardians, masters;—they being the only men likely to know their ages with sufficient accuracy to be able to use that knowledge for their own protection, and in the case of children over 11, their victims' more complete ruin—pleading *consent* in legal justification of their crime.

Laws which produce such results may satisfy some statesmen so fully, as to leave them freedom and quiet of mind to meditate their philanthropic schemes for protecting infant life by the registration and inspection of nurses. Not only do they not content us, but we shall accept as final no changes that may be made in them, until the State shall afford to all its female subjects, irrespective of wealth or poverty, up to the age of 17,¹⁵ full, and up to the age of 19, partial protection against the dangers with

¹⁵ We do not mean that no girls are capable of defending their own honour before seventeen years of age, but only that we are not justified in expecting those most exposed to temptations, and least prepared by previous training and example to resist them, to do so. It is the absence of good influences, quite as much as the presence of temptations, which calls for the interference of the State.

which there is no security that they will be able to cope earlier. And, as we before avowed our intentions of opposing all legislation tending to shift on to official shoulders the responsibilities of men, so now we declare our determination to oppose all legislation which does not rest upon this, to us, indisputable truth,—that it is better to remove the causes and conditions of evils, than to control or soften their results, and to persist in that opposition, unless convinced, in each separate instance, that all possible means of prevention have been employed and failed, and that all laws calculated to encourage or facilitate the evils complained of, have been repealed.

Now, in the particular case before us, will Parliament have done all that this principle demands of it, when it has made the needful alterations in the law relating to seductions ? Certainly not, since, on examining the subject more closely, we find that state responsibility for infanticide and the excessive mortality prevailing among illegitimate infants, is not confined to the law limiting to so extremely early an age the period during which girls shall be defended against the selfishness and brutality of men, but that the charge of contributing to those evils can, with equal justice, be brought against other parts of our legalised social system.

Let us for a moment return to figures.

According to Mr. Curgenven, 50,000 women become, in England, yearly, the mothers of illegitimate infants, and of these 50,000, taking the proportion of four to one obtained from the Rescue Society's statistics, 37,500 are seduced before the age of nineteen. Unfortunately, we have no like data from which to calculate the ages of the seducers, but we believe the majority of them to be men, not boys ; and we ask on which of the two sinners, through whose sin an innocent and helpless human creature is brought into the world, the mature man or the immature girl, (child would be often the more appropriate term, since motherhood at fifteen is no unusual occurrence) does the chief moral responsibility for its life and welfare rest ?

Again, what is the social position held by these 50,000 mothers, what the educational advantages they have enjoyed ? The reports of such associations as the Rescue Society and the Homes of Hope, leave no doubt that they belong chiefly to the lower social strata,

and are, as a rule, very imperfectly educated, often not educated at all. Here, too, there being no associations for the rescue and reformation of fallen men, we cannot speak positively as to the social position and education of the seducers; but we know that whatever may be the truth as regards the whole number of seductions, where seduction is followed by desertion¹⁶ and those are the instances in which there is reason to apprehend infanticide—the betrayers are often better born, better bred,¹⁷ better taught, than the betrayed; and once more we ask: on which of the two transgressors, to whose transgression an innocent and helpless human creature owes the misfortune of its birth, on him who possesses and knows more, or on her who possesses and knows less, does the chief moral responsibility for its life and welfare lie? Again, we answer boldly, on the man.¹⁸

But legal responsibilities must correspond to moral ones. Let us not be misunderstood; we do not say that it is possible, or even advisable, to make legal *co-extensive* with moral responsibility; the principle which we maintain, and of which, in as far as we can influence it, we mean to make the future legislation of England

¹⁶ Mrs. Evans, of Stroud, in a letter already cited, writes:—"Public opinion in the operative class usually compels marriage where a man has seduced a girl." It is well known that in the labouring classes, though seduction is too often the result of keeping company, marriage generally precedes the birth of a child, and no stigma, in such cases, attaches even to the woman.

¹⁷ We use the current terms, but only to protest against them. All men are nobly born in virtue of the humanity which God bestows and Christ ennobles; and he, alone, is better bred than his brethren, in whom the moral nature, which all alike possess, is cultivated to bring forth in larger measure the fruits of the Spirit.

¹⁸ We are well aware that the mothers of children placed in baby farms are not all of a class about which statistics can be obtained from the Rescue Society or any other association of like character. Some are ladies; others, of whom this cannot exactly be said, are, at least, not the daughters of poor men; but if the argument of the superior social condition of the seducer does not touch them, that which is based upon his superior age and knowledge undoubtedly does so; indeed, we are inclined to believe that it is just in their case that the disparity in the relative ages of the seducer and the seduced would, on examination, be found to be the greatest; firstly, because the opportunities for familiar intimacy with their daughters, which parents in the higher ranks of society deny to young men, they often freely afford to those whom they look upon as their own friends and contemporaries; secondly, because girls are least likely to be on their guard with men in whom they see their parents place trust; thirdly, because poverty, the element which, at any age, may enter into the sum of the causes to which female unchastity can be traced, being, in their case, absent, more weight must be given to ignorance, inexperience, or immaturity of judgment,—all causes which exercise their chief influence in early youth.

the expression, is that there must be no contradiction betwixt Acts of Parliament and the teachings of virtue and morality.

Let us turn now to the clauses of the Poor Law, treating of the claims of illegitimate children upon their parents¹⁹—merely noting, in passing, that it is in the Poor Law that those claims must be studied, all such infants entering life as paupers—and there we shall find:—

Firstly, that under no circumstances can the father be made to contribute more than half-a-crown weekly towards the maintenance of his illegitimate child except during the first six weeks of its existence, in respect of which period a weekly payment of five shillings may be ordered.

Secondly, that unless an application for a summons against the father is made within twelve months of the birth of the child, or, if made later, the application can be substantiated by proof that within the first twelve months he has, by paying money towards its support, virtually acknowledged it to be his, he is absolved for ever from all legal responsibility for its life, well-being, and education.

Thirdly, that if by enlisting, emigrating, or otherwise absenting himself, the father can succeed in avoiding service of the summons before the time appointed for the hearing of the application, and twelve months have elapsed from the birth of the child, his responsibility for its support thereby lapses, and he cannot be compelled to recognise or assist it, unless, as before stated, he has contributed towards its support within the period of twelve months.

Fourthly, that if through neglect, ignorance, or any other cause, the mother of an illegitimate child permits the allowance made by the putative father to fall in arrear, she cannot later recover more than the amount due for thirteen weeks, whatever the length of time during which the father has neglected to make the payment ordered by the justices.

Fifthly, that a father's liability to contribute two shillings and sixpence, or less, towards the maintenance of his illegitimate child

¹⁹ There is a belief very generally prevailing in the world which, as regards England, requires correction, viz. : that all children have two parents. Every child that enjoys the privilege of being born an Englishman or an Englishwoman has, for all purposes before the law, only one—if legitimate, a father; if illegitimate, a mother. It is just possible that Nature knew best, and that some of the evils of our social state may arise out of this violation of her laws.

ends with its thirteenth year, or at any earlier date, should the mother marry.

Sixthly, that for the further protection of the fathers of illegitimate children, the cost in the first instance, and also the trouble of obtaining the order, and afterwards of seeing that it is enforced, is thrown upon the mother; parish officers of every kind being forbidden, under a penalty of 40s., to interfere in any way, unless the child has become chargeable to the parish.²⁰

The law relating to the responsibility of the mothers of such children is summed up in a single clause, which for the sake of its admirable clearness and simplicity we print in full:—

“And be it declared and enacted, that every woman neglecting to maintain her bastard child, being able wholly or in part so to do, whereby such child becomes chargeable to any parish or union, shall be punishable as an idle and disorderly person, under the provisions of an Act made and passed in the fifth year of the reign of his late Majesty King George the Fourth, entitled: ‘An Act for the punishment of Idle and Disorderly Persons, and Rogues,

²⁰ 7 & 8 Vict., cap. 101, sec. 7.

“And be it enacted, that it shall not be lawful for any justice of the peace to appoint any officer of any parish or union, clerk of justices, or constable to receive any money in respect of any bastard child under an order of petty sessions as aforesaid, or as such officer to conduct any application to make or enforce such order, or in any way to interfere as such officer in causing such application to be made, or in procuring evidence in support of such application, under a penalty of forty shillings; to be levied on conviction before any two justices as penalties and forfeitures under the said first-recited act. Provided always that after the death of such mother, or if such mother be incapacitated as aforesaid (by being in gaol or under sentence of transportation, or of unsound mind) so often as any bastard child for whose maintenance such order of petty sessions has been made becomes chargeable to any parish or union by the neglect of the putative father to make the payments due under the orders of justices, then, and in such case it shall be lawful for any board of guardians, of any union or parish, or if there be no such board of guardians, for the overseers of any parish or place to make such application for the enforcement of the order as might have been made by the mother of such bastard child, if alive; but all payments for the maintenance of such child, made in pursuance of such application, shall be made to some person to be from time to time appointed by the justices as hereinbefore provided, and on condition that such bastard child shall cease to be chargeable to such parish or union.” This clause was not contained in the old Poor-Law, but was inserted in the new, on the plea that the activity of the parish authorities, prompted by respect for the interest of the ratepayers, to discover the putative fathers of illegitimate children, and to compel them to contribute to their support, encouraged immorality in women; the encouragement given by this prohibition to immorality in men, awakening no alarm in the sensitive consciences of our legislators. (See also Hansard’s Debates, Vol. xxiv. of Third Series, June and July, 1834, pages 220 et seq., Debate on New Poor Law.)

and Vagabonds, in that part of the United Kingdom called England ; and every woman so neglecting to maintain her bastard child, after having been once before convicted of such offence, and every woman deserting her bastard child, whereby such bastard child becomes chargeable to any parish or union, shall be punishable as a Rogue and Vagabond under the provisions of the last recited Act."

The only comment which we shall allow ourselves to make on such legislation, will be to state the conclusions at which the contemplation of it has reluctantly forced us to arrive.

We are always loth to attribute improper motives or aims to our law-givers, past or present ; we would fain believe that every man who undertakes to serve his country, is zealous for that country's good ; but facts are sometimes too strong for our wishes. The laws relating to seduction, and those relating to illegitimacy, each taken separately, are bad enough; looked at together, as links in a single chain, they give a terrible shock to our faith in the morality of English statesmanship ; and when we turn from them to the recent Acts for the cure of contagious disease, and study the defence of the latter, advanced by their apologists, we cannot resist the conviction that all these measures have sprung from the same poisonous root,—the notion which some would have us receive as an axiom of moral and social science, that vice is necessary to men, and being necessary, should go unpunished and unchecked ; the duty of Parliament towards it being limited to the discovery of means for obviating, to some extent, the evils which it entails upon society. And as these laws, taken together, bear damning testimony to their immoral origin, so do they supply proof that successive Parliaments have acquiesced in this interpretation of their duty ; for if they had really set before themselves the task of repressing the vice which is the parent of seduction and illegitimacy, their first act would have been, by the imposition of severe penalties upon all who should seek to lead girls astray, to mark their belief in a power of self-control inherent in man ; their second, by giving every facility for the discovery of a putative father, and by exacting from him the strictest discharge of his duties towards his illegitimate child, to proclaim their intention of upholding impartially and to the full, the principle of parental responsibility ; their third, by an indignant rejection of every proposal based upon the doctrine of the necessity of vice, to clear

themselves of all suspicion of a secret leaning towards so brutalising a theory of human nature.

It is with the deepest regret that we bring so heavy a charge against the Parliaments of England, and even in making it, we are ready to believe that the majority of those who have sanctioned such unjust and faithless legislation have done so rather through incapacity to judge for themselves of the causes of evils, or the probable effects of their proposed palliatives, aggravated by the natural inclination to regard every question from an exclusively masculine point of view, than from any distinct recognition and acceptance of the noxious principle on which it is really based.

As we have said, such laws need no comment ; their absurdity or injustice must be clear to all who hold our principle that legal and moral responsibility ought to correspond, and we should only waste time in trying to prove them absurd and unjust to those who think that, as regards sexual vice, men²¹ are brutes, and therefore unaccountable for their actions ; and we might therefore proceed at once to show what changes in the laws of seduction and bastardy would lead to an immediate diminution of infant mortality, were it not necessary for us first to take a broader view of the whole subject than that to which our refusal to consider the Infant Life Protection Bill as applicable to any but deserted infants has hitherto limited us.

We should leave the readers of this pamphlet with very false ideas were we not to express our conviction that direct infanticide has little to do with the terribly high death-rate prevailing among young children,²² and that, apart from direct infanticide, the proportion of deaths among legitimate, is as great as among illegitimate children, the absolute number being of course greatly in excess in the case of the former.

The total number of births in England yearly being about 800,000, the legitimate births are to the illegitimate as 15 to 1;

²¹ It is an instructive fact, that no law seems to be based upon the same assumption as regards women ; and the Poor Law clause, stringently enforcing the responsibility of mothers for their illegitimate children, is in itself an unconscious testimony to the belief pervading even the male portion of the community, that women are really moral, and therefore accountable beings.

²² See evidence of Mr. E. Herford, city coroner, given before the committee appointed to inquire into the causes of infant mortality, reported in the *Manchester Examiner and Times*, June 14th, 1871.

and if, as it is asserted, nearly half of all the children born die under five years of age, it is clear that any remedies that we may propose will be very inadequate if we apply them merely to the illegitimate portion of the nation. We must, therefore, briefly point out the causes of infant mortality common to both legitimate and illegitimate infants, and those, if any, which operate only in the case of the former.

It is self-evident that of the common causes, ignorance and poverty are the chief. What chance of life have infants whose mothers believe that by passing them three times under the stomach of an ass they will be cured of whooping cough ; or whose fathers regard a necklace of sacramental shillings as a specific for epilepsy ?²³ If proper food and clothing are essential to the growth and health of children, are they likely to thrive in the care of mothers who know so little of the digestive organs as to feed an infant of four months old on beer, bacon, and potato pasty ?²⁴

And supposing this ignorance to be removed, how must it still fare with the little ones, whilst thousands of mothers cannot afford to give them the food they need, and, toiling from morning to night to keep a roof over their own and their children's heads, have not time or strength to make them fitting clothing, even had they money wherewith to buy the materials.

It is of no use for members of Parliament and medical men to say—hand them over to nurses whom we will license and duly inspect. Neither at home nor abroad can mothers whose wages average less than nine shillings a week provide properly for their children's maintenance ; and no amount of registering and inspecting can prevent the delicate infants of such mothers from dying, nor the strong ones from growing up stunted and diseased.

But every mother supposes a father. Surely it is out of his wages that the children are supported ; and the earnings of men are greater than those of women.

The answer to this question brings us to one of the special causes of excessive mortality in the case of legitimate children,—viz., the want of any legal way by which a wife can compel her husband to provide for her and their common offspring. Of course

²³ Both of these superstitions prevail in eastern Cheshire.

²⁴ The mother in this case was the wife of a wealthy farmer, and the child so nourished was her sixth.

we are aware that the law of agency does in an indirect manner afford to married women the means of obtaining food and clothing for their children and themselves ; but, practically, this law only applies to the wives of men in the higher ranks of life. Shopkeepers will not give credit to a married woman, however necessary the articles which she may desire to purchase, where they know the husband to be idle, drunken, or on bad terms with his wife ; and she has therefore no choice, save to maintain her children out of her own earnings, or to apply to the Poor Law officers, who, though they are *not bound* to relieve her merely because her husband neglects to provide for her, may, if they see fit, first grant her relief, and then sue the husband for the sum so granted.²⁵

The notion that women are supported by men is so deeply rooted in the public mind, that it is difficult to disabuse people of it, even in the case of unmarried women, and the difficulty is infinitely greater in the case of the married ;²⁶ yet it is just

²⁵ An article in the *Englishwoman's Journal* for October, 1870, gives an instance, taken from the *Devonport Independent*, where the relieving officer, knowing the husband to be in receipt of adequate wages, tore up the order for food and wine which the Union medical man had given to a sick woman, who, having no way of compelling her husband to supply her with what, in her then state, were real necessities, save through the action which the relieving officer refused to take, literally died of starvation ; and the writer of that article asserts that like instances are not uncommon.

Out of Door Relief Prohibitory Order.

Art. 1. Every able-bodied person, male or female, requiring relief from any parish within any of the said unions shall be relieved wholly within the workhouse of the union, save and except in the following cases :—

Art. 1—7. Where such person shall be the wife or child of any able-bodied man who shall be in the service of Her Majesty as soldier, sailor, or marine.

Art. 1—8. Where any able-bodied person not being a soldier, sailor, or marine shall not reside within the union, but the wife and children of such person shall reside within the same, the board of guardians, according to their discretion, may, subject to the regulations contained in Art. 4, afford relief in the workhouse to such wife, child, or children, or may allow out-door relief for such children as are within the age of nineteen and resident with their mother.

Art. 4 refers to women whose husbands are prisoners or lunatics.—Glen, Poor Law Board Orders, 1871.

²⁶ “The vocation of women is to make life endurable I wish to see women continue in that vocation in which they are engaged, and doing all that is admirable, amiable, and delightful.”—Speech of Mr. Scourfield in the House of Commons, May 4th, 1870.

“I consider that women have to educate their children ; they have to adorn the sphere in which they live, and to perform duties with regard, not merely to the rising generation, but with regard to their husbands, brothers, and friends.”—Speech of Mr. Fowler, May 4th, 1870.

another of those erroneous beliefs, which call loudly for correction, because they are obstacles in the way of a true and permanent improvement of our social condition. As a matter of fact the money value of the domestic services rendered by the wives of labouring men is at least equal to the money value of the maintenance they receive in return, while a large proportion of wives, in the manufacturing districts, contribute to the maintenance of the household. Many do this in an equal or even higher degree than the husband, while some provide for it altogether; and the labour by which this is done being imposed upon them in addition to the burden which, as mothers, they have already to bear, their share in the world's work is absolutely greater than that of men.²⁷ At Stroud, according to Mrs. Evans, whose letter we have already cited, so little does the received theory affect the lives of the working classes, that some husbands pay the rent, others pay for the bread; those who do both are considered very generous, the obvious inference being, that the wives, until the children are old enough to work, provide all the clothing of the family, and all the food except the bread.²⁸

"Women cannot be brought into contact with the rough occupations of men without defiling their modesty and purity."—Speech of Mr. Bouverie, May 3rd, 1871.

When we read such words and remember in what place they were originally spoken, we are seized with doubts as to the accuracy of the census returns of 1861, which give 838,856, 487,575, and 2,110,318 as the numbers respectively of wives, widows, and spinsters who work for their subsistence; so incompatible do such figures seem with the ornamental theory of woman's vocation; and when we recall Mr. Dudley Baxter's tables, and the conclusions which we drew from them as to the kinds of work in which women are allowed to share, and the wages wherewith their toil is remunerated, we cannot help fearing that they must frequently fail in their mission of making life endurable—at least to themselves.

²⁷ We must guard ourselves against the inference which may be drawn from the tenour of the above paragraph, that we wish to represent working men as habitually neglectful of their wives and families.

²⁸ At the Liverpool Police-court, on June 24th, 1871, a man named Ashton Keefe was charged with having been drunk and set fire to his child Julia, a girl about seven or eight years of age. Superintendent Kehoe said that on the previous evening the prisoner went home drunk; he sent his little girl out to get some beer, and because she was not able to get back quickly enough he knocked her down, put a box of matches in her breast and set fire to them. She was not, however, seriously burned. The prisoner, who had not a shirt to his back, seemed to have employment enough and money sufficient to get continually drunk with.—Mr. Brancker: Is he sober now? Superintendent Kehoe: No, I think not.—In answer to the charge the prisoner said he knew nothing about it. Julia Keefe, who appeared in the witness box with both her eyes blackened, said the prisoner was her father, and she lived with him in Tyndall-street. Between five and six o'clock on Friday evening her father came home

A clergyman, holding a living in the suburb of a manufacturing town, tells us that, appalled by the extreme youth of the couples who come to him to be married, he has tried to prove to his male parishioners the folly and wickedness of early marriages, but that his arguments have failed to produce any effect on men, who avow that they marry to have the benefit of the wages of their wives and children, not scrupling to add that the more of the latter the former can give birth to, the longer the period during which they, the fathers, shall enjoy the advantage of their earnings.

Mrs. Whitehead, from whose letter we have also previously quoted, speaking of the upper valley of the Irwell, where a man earns from £1 to £2 per week, says many married women there work in the mills, because the husbands regard it as so much loss of money, week by week, if the wives remain at home; and both she and Mrs. Evans agree that in this fact is to be found the chief explanation of the terrible waste of infant life, which seems equally to disgrace the districts where wages are low, and those where they are high. Could husbands be made to maintain their wives and children, this cause of infant mortality would cease to operate.

But there is yet another cause of infant mortality among legitimate children, and that is the unlimited nature of a man's so-called

drunk, and sent her out to sell chips. She was only absent about five minutes, and her father then sent her for a pint of ale. She was not five minutes away, but her father said she had been two hours away, and then seized her by the hair and dashed her against the fireplace. He next put his leg on her stomach, put a box of matches down her breast and set fire to them. She at once got hold of them with her hands, as they were sticking to her breast, and pulled them out. She was not very much burned, but her breast was blistered.—Superintendent Kehoe: How did you get those black eyes? Witness: My father hit me with a bottle.—Bridget Keefe was then called, and said, in answer to Superintendent Kehoe, that the prisoner was her husband. He did not help her nor her family. She had had nothing from him for two months; on the contrary, she had to give him money. She further said she had to work for her living, and did not see the assault, as she was at work at the time. She would rather get rid of her husband, because she would do better without him. Some time ago he kicked her severely, so that she lost for a time the use of her limbs. The prisoner, when asked what he had to say, replied that he was drunk and knew nothing about it.—Mr. Brancker: You have heard what your wife has said, that you will do nothing for your family. You are a great scamp.—Prisoner: Yes, sir.—Mr. Brancker: You are a perfect disgrace to humanity. Such conduct as yours is almost inconceivable. The utmost we can do is to send you to gaol for six months with hard labour, and that we certainly shall do. The prisoner was then removed from the dock.

conjugal rights, consequent on the immoral doctrine that marriage absolves a husband from the duty of self-control. A woman once married is, as regards her own person, a slave. No matter how clearly she may see the folly and the sin of bringing into the world children to die, or to live in poverty, ignorance, and disease; no matter how well she may know, by bitter experience, that the burden of an ever-increasing family will fall upon her; no matter how great the risk to her health, or even to her reason or her life, attendant upon pregnancy and child-birth, neither law nor custom allows her to defend herself against the ignorance, or recklessness, or brutality of her husband, and she must, at his pleasure, submit to be made a mother every year, or, probably, if delicate, to suffer a miscarriage every six months.

For this evil there is but one remedy—the release of the wife from the legal obligation which now binds her in this respect, and the spread among men of a sentiment which would regard the physical aspect of marriage as entirely subordinate to its social and moral duties.

Let it be remembered that infants do not perish in such numbers, merely because their mothers leave them to the care of incapable old women or sisters, still half babies themselves, but because those mothers work up to the very day, often up to the very hour of their birth. It is nothing uncommon for women to leave the mill in the pains of labour, and women char and wash to within an hour or two of their confinement. Yet the farmer knows that if the foal is to be healthy, he must not work the mare just previous to its birth; and sportsmen forbear to hunt the pointer or setter that is with young. So long therefore, as like consideration is not granted to human mothers, it is absurd to sigh over still-born children, or infants that breathe only to die.²⁹

We will now briefly recapitulate the causes of that excessive infant mortality, which we agree with Mr. Charley in deplored, and which we have found to be :

²⁹ Every rank of society, from the highest to the lowest, shows us the same sad spectacle of women, still young, dying, worn out by perpetual child-bearing, or living on in constant weakness, weariness, and pain, from the same cause; and here and there one is shocked by hearing of a still worse case, in which doctors having warned the husband that another confinement will prove fatal to his wife, another child is born, and the mother dies—murdered.

1.—The ignorance and poverty of the parents, or in the case of an illegitimate child—the mother.

2.—Early seductions.

3.—The difficulty experienced by the mothers of illegitimate children in maintaining them.

4.—The insufficient legal protection afforded to young girls against their own weakness and ignorance and the arts of the seducer.

5.—The grossly unjust favour which the law of bastardy shows to the fathers of illegitimate children.

6.—The overwork of mothers during pregnancy.

7.—The custom by which married women return to work immediately after the birth of their infants, leaving those infants to the care of nurses.

8.—The total want of a simple legal method by which a married woman can compel her husband to support her and her children.

9.—The relation of personal slavery in which the law of England places every woman towards her husband.³⁰

We will now proceed to state the remedies by which we believe that some of these causes may be abolished and the force of the rest much diminished, leaving however the ignorance and poverty which we have placed at the head of our list, to be considered last.

Our first proposal, aimed at early seduction as a cause of infanticide and excessive mortality among illegitimate children, is to alter the existing law relating to that offence so as to make it a felony to seduce a girl under seventeen, and misdemeanour to seduce one under nineteen years of age.

The reasons why we have fixed upon those two ages, to mark respectively the limits of full and partial State protection, will be apparent to all who have borne in mind the figures of the Refuge Society, by which it is conclusively shown that more girls are led astray at sixteen than at any other age, and that it is not until they have completed their nineteenth year, that any very striking diminution in the numbers of those who are yearly seduced can be demonstrated.

As regards the law of bastardy, considered as a cause of infan-

³⁰ A more accurate division would be one which should give 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, as the causes of excessive infant mortality, and 4, 5, 8, 9 as the causes of those causes.

ticide and excessive mortality among illegitimate infants, we have several suggestions to offer.

1.—Let it be enacted that the parents are the persons legally responsible for the life, health, and education of an illegitimate child.

2.—To put an end to the difficulty hitherto experienced in making fathers responsible for the maintenance of such infants, let every man whom a woman may name, in the application for an affiliation order, as the father of her child, be bound in surety to appear to answer the charge and be liable to pursuit and imprisonment should he abscond.

3.—Let the cost of applying for an affiliation order in the case of a first child be borne in the first instance by the parish when the parish authorities shall be satisfied that there is reasonable ground for the application, to be recoverable from the father on the order being made, or from the woman, if it should appear that the accusation has been false and malicious.

4.—Let the guardians (or public prosecutor) be bound to pursue and prosecute absconders.

5.—Let it be lawful for a woman to apply for an affiliation order before the birth of her child, or at any time during the period in which the father of such child is legally responsible for its support.

6.—Let that period of liability be extended from the child's thirteenth to its sixteenth year, whether the mother marries or not.

7.—Repeal the clauses in the present Poor Law, in virtue of which that liability is now allowed to lapse; also that by which the father cannot be made to pay up arrears for more than thirteen weeks, although he may have neglected payment for a longer time.

8.—Remove the legal proceedings in the case of an application for an affiliation order from the summary jurisdiction of the magistrates, and let all such applications be heard and decided by a jury.

9.—Do away with the provision fixing half-a-crown per week as the maximum amount to be paid by the father of an illegitimate child towards its support, and leave it to the jury to make the order for any sum they may think just, taking into account the means of the father and the standard of living in the class to which the mother belongs.

10.—Allow circumstantial evidence to exercise its due weight upon the decision of the jury.³¹

11.—In each parish empower some officer to receive the allowance paid in obedience to an affiliation order, and make the said officer accountable for the money so received to the person lawfully in charge of the child.

12. Give out-door relief to a woman, the amount to be left to the discretion of the guardians, in the case of a first illegitimate infant, but never in the case of a second.

13.—Should an illegitimate child die, or suffer bodily harm, from starvation, desertion, or neglect, indict the father for manslaughter, or cruelty.

The first of these proposals, viz., that the parents shall be declared responsible for the life and welfare of their illegitimate child, is valuable as an assertion of the principle on which all those that follow are necessarily based, and because, like all true laws, it rests, not upon temporary expediency nor the arbitrary will of the legislature, but upon the facts and teachings of nature.

Without the co-operation of two persons, the one male, the other female, no child can exist, and to those two persons the responsibility for its birth is strictly limited. The fact of giving it birth, entails upon that man and woman the duty of maintaining it in childhood, and fitting it to provide for itself in after life ; and that duty is primarily towards the child, secondarily towards the State, on which the burden of supporting it would devolve, should the parents abandon it. But though their responsibility is only in the second instance towards the State, on the State lies primarily and solely the duty of compelling them to recognise and discharge that responsibility ; the person chiefly interested in its due performance being incapable of advancing, or even understanding

³¹ Circumstantial evidence is already admitted, but the law requires that corroborative evidence shall be given in some material particular, and this clause being very stringently interpreted by many magistrates, it becomes, in many cases, impossible to secure a conviction, even where there is no moral doubt as to the truth of the accusation.

“There is great difficulty in bringing home to the putative father the connection which would throw upon him the liability of maintaining the child The law on this matter was exceptional, as it made it necessary that the evidence of the woman should be corroborated in some material fact before the man was made liable, and when he was made liable, the amount he had to contribute seemed to be not adequate.”—*Charge of Baron Pigott, at the Devon Lent Assizes, March 9, 1871.*

his claims; and we hold, that the State can in no way render more effectual assistance to the unconscious possessor of filial rights, than by a solemn and authoritative assertion of their existence. The indirect power exercised by law through its influence on the formation of public opinion, equals, if it does not exceed, that which it possesses in virtue of the penalties it can inflict ; the bare assertion by the body to which they look as the representative of the national will, and the expounder of the national conscience, that men are bound to pursue or avoid a certain course of action, induces multitudes to approve or condemn the conduct so sanctioned or stigmatised, without any personal inquiry into its morality or its immorality. This indirect power, inherent in legislation, having, as regards illegitimacy, been hitherto used to deaden the public conscience, and pervert the public judgment, as a preliminary step towards the introduction of juster and more righteous laws, we consider an affirmation of the moral principle underlying them essential. The true end and aim of all legislation is to make men better, and it is in principles, not in provisions, however excellent, that regenerative force resides. Provisions are useful in support of principles, but when the latter have had time to work their way into the hearts and minds of two or three generations, public opinion becomes the most powerful agent in enforcing them. When the man who fails to provide for his child, legitimate or illegitimate, is scouted as a brute, we shall have gained the best security that this world affords, that no human creature will again be born into it only to die.

But as we are far, as yet, from possessing such security for the principle of parental responsibility for all children, whether born in marriage, or out of marriage, we will now proceed to examine the provisions by which we propose to compel its observance in the case of the latter, by the parent who has hitherto systematically ignored and violated it.³²

³² If it be objected that our proposals tend to impair the sanctity of marriage by giving a *quasi* legal sanction to relations contracted without, or in contravention of, its obligations, we reply that the marriage tie is at present largely and systematically violated as a consequence of the laxity with which such violation by men is regarded by society, and of the legal immunity of men from the consequences of such violation. We say that legislation which fixed upon men grave responsibilities, in case of irregular relations between the sexes would directly tend to diminish the frequency of such irregular relations, and consequently to the preservation of the sanctity of marriage.

Suggestion 2, which provides means for preventing fathers from shirking their duty towards their natural children and the State by emigration, enlistment, or any other form of absconding, and suggestions 3 and 4, which shut against them the door of escape, which they have hitherto enjoyed in the ignorance and poverty of the mother, by throwing upon the parish authorities the obligation of applying for, and enforcing an affiliation order, are open, so far as we can see, to only one objection, viz.: that they would add to the annoyance and vexation of a man wrongfully accused. But this objection can be raised with equal force against every law, under which an accusation of any sort can be preferred. It is always unpleasant for the innocent to be accused of guilt; but it is equally unpleasant, and more dangerous, for the injured to be denied a remedy. There are 50,000 illegitimate children born in England yearly, yet the instances are rare in which the fathers are forced to contribute towards the support of such children; proportionately great, therefore, is the number of mothers on whom the sole burden of caring for them, and the sole punishment for deserting them is thrown.

With the safeguard furnished by the obligation of showing some reasonable ground before the parish authorities become bound to take proceedings, and the further protection of a severe penalty in case of malicious falsehood, we are convinced that men who were ordinarily discreet in their conduct would run no appreciable risk of being falsely accused.

As regards proposals 5 and 7, nothing need be said; for a cordial acceptance of the principle of parental responsibility for illegitimate infants is incompatible with the legal provision of loopholes, by which one of the two parents, and he the one most capable as a rule of fulfilling his obligations, can slip out of them; and we have no hope of gaining the support of those who reject that principle; but proposal 6, for extending the period during which a father, if known, is held liable for the maintenance of his bastard child, requires to be briefly discussed, and perhaps our reasons for proposing this extension of the time of liability can be best set forth if we consider proposal 6 in connection with proposal 9, putting an end to the limit hitherto placed upon the amount for which an order upon a putative father can be made.

The date at which, under the new Poor Law, that liability has

hitherto expired was fixed on the supposition that by the time the child had completed its thirteenth year it would be able to earn sufficient wages to relieve the parish of the burden of its support ; and the limit as to amount was in like manner calculated with reference to the sum for which the said child could then be maintained in the workhouse. Now it is quite right that the burden borne by the ratepayers for every such child should be made as light, both as to time and to amount, as is compatible with its being so reared and trained, as to afford a reasonable presumption that it will not fall back upon the parish, at any rate, before old age ; but the moral measure of parish and parental responsibility are not the same, and there ought to be a corresponding difference in the child's legal claims upon the two. No child, by reason of its birth, apart from the position of its parents, ought to be regarded and treated as a pauper, as a being possessed of no right save that to hold existence on the terms which the experience of poor-law officials proves to be compatible with life ; and, in some respects, the moral claims of an illegitimate child upon its parents are stronger than those of a legitimate child, since it is fairly entitled to claim compensation at their hands for the legal and social disadvantages to which, through their act, it has been born. We are also of opinion that the bastardy law ought not only to secure the child, injured by its birth, from additional wrong, but should also act as a check upon the lawless passions which call such children into being. In the case of poor men, the liability imposed upon them by the existing law, *if enforced*, may suffice, and we fully recognise the absurdity of demanding more from any man than he can pay ; but in the case of the rich man, it is vain to suppose that in sentencing him to pay for the maintenance of his own child a sum scarce amounting to the third of the cost of the keep of one of his horses, the law has done anything to hinder his bringing, if it so please him, a dozen such children into the world to increase pauperism, discontent, and perhaps the crime of the country. It is then in the interest both of illegitimate children and of the community, that we ask for such a change in the laws relating to the maintenance of those children as shall materially lengthen the period of paternal responsibility and increase the amount at which that responsibility can be assessed, subject only to a limitation which will guard the proposed change against acting as an

inducement to women of the lower class to yield to the solicitations of seducers of the higher, viz : The provision that in estimating the allowance to be paid by a putative father, the standard of living in the rank of life to which the mother belongs, must always be taken into account.

The increased liabilities imposed upon putative fathers by provisions 7 and 9, explain and justify proposal 8—to make all applications for an affiliation order, jury cases. The justice of the decision to be given having become of so much more importance to the accused, and all illicit ways of evading the sentence having been cut off, it is but right to afford them the protection of a more deliberate and public consideration of the accusation which they are called upon to meet.

Proposals 10 and 11 are the only two which directly favour the mother of an illegitimate child ; the former by permitting her to avail herself fully of that testimony of circumstances in support of her charge which in nine cases out of ten is the only evidence that can be produced to substantiate the claims of her child ; the latter, by protecting her against the danger frequently run, when a woman is brought into renewed intercourse with her seducer—the two-fold danger, namely, of suffering violence from his anger or if the affection which led to her original error is not yet dead within her, of being a second time led astray.

But as a second seduction would probably result in the birth of a second child, and so entail, perhaps, fresh expense, certainly fresh trouble on the guardians, this provision, though imposing an additional duty on the parish authorities, is really framed for their defence and benefit, and viewed in that light, it leads up naturally to provision 12, which, whilst permitting out-door relief to be given to the mother of one illegitimate infant, refuses it absolutely to the mother of two.

Our reason for recommending that out-door relief should be given in the former case, is one which will commend itself to the minds of all those who have fully realised the significance of the facts which we have given, as to the youth of the women seduced.

The female ward in the workhouse is about the worst school in which a girl can be placed ; the longer she remains in it, the more likely is she to make it her permanent home, or to exchange

it only for a prison cell ; and as we have no right to conclude from the birth of one child, that the mother is naturally or incorrigibly vicious, (affection being almost always at the root of a first error), to keep her in so demoralising an atmosphere, is at once the most unjust and the most foolish course the law can pursue. From the experience of Homes and Refuges, it does not seem that the sense of parental responsibility requires, as a rule, any strengthening in the mothers of illegitimate children, and the proportion of first births, among such children being to all other births, so far as statistics can be obtained, as 3 to 1, the risk of increasing the burdens of ratepayers by permitting the mother to be at large, and yet to receive parish relief, or by allowing her to leave her infant in the workhouse, whilst she goes out to try to earn money for its support, would be very small.³³

But the question of out-door or in-door relief assumes a very different aspect where a woman has more than one illegitimate child ; for as she can no longer plead ignorance and inexperience as her excuse for yielding to her seducer, there is, in the fact of the birth of a second infant, so strong a presumption that the mother's nature is sensual and vicious, as to warrant society in refusing her any aid, except upon terms which place a further repetition of her offence utterly out of the question.

By giving assistance and freedom to the mothers of first children, the chances are in favour of an ultimate diminution of the rates ; by granting like assistance and liberty to the mothers of two or more illegitimate children, the chances are in favour of increasing them permanently and indefinitely ; it is, therefore, for the benefit of the ratepayers that we ask for out-door relief for the former, and strongly deprecate its being accorded to the latter.³⁴

³³ How small the risk run by the ratepayers it would be impossible to tell, unless we could estimate in how far the influence exercised by the enforced corrupting association in the workhouse with older and really depraved women on the minds of young girls, leads to their becoming mothers for the second time ; but taken in connection with the proposed measures for ensuring the participation of putative fathers in support of their children, we believe that this particular suggestion would entail no fresh expenses on the parish, whilst by the adoption of all our proposals the burden it has now to bear would be largely and permanently lightened.

³⁴ All the societies for the rescue of women are guided by the belief that, first children are the fruit of ignorance, inexperience, and true, though misplaced, affection ; second children, the result of a vicious temperament or a corrupted mind ; and all of them, therefore, confine their efforts to seeking out and aiding the former.

Our last proposal that, where an illegitimate child dies or suffers bodily harm, from starvation, desertion or neglect, the father shall be liable to indictment for manslaughter or cruelty, as the case may demand, springs so directly from the principle of parental responsibility, as to require no defence; for if penalties are not to be inflicted for the neglect of a duty, that duty, so far as the State is concerned, has no existence. Some elucidation, however, it does call for, since, taken as it stands, it might seem that we desire to make the father alone accountable; whilst our real intention is, that the mother and the nurse, if there has been one, shall be held to answer the same charge; our reason for not mentioning their names in the proposal being that they can already be rendered responsible. It is the father who hitherto has escaped accusation and punishment, and it is the object of the proposed change to prevent his doing so any longer.

How direct infanticide, by the mother, is to be dealt with, is a more difficult question; as its solution, we venture to suggest that, considering that in such cases the mother is usually in a physical condition which makes her, for the time, scarcely a moral or accountable agent, and that the crime is almost always committed under circumstances of sheer desperation, it is unjust to place such an offence on a level with ordinary murder, and, therefore, that such infanticide shall be taken out of the category of capital crimes, and that this change in the nature of the indictment having been made, the seducer shall be included in it, where desertion or cruel neglect can be brought home to him.

The changes we have proposed in the law of seduction, by reducing the number of illegitimate births, and in the bastardy law, by laying a large share of the responsibility for natural children upon the fathers, will, indirectly, do much to lessen the difficulties against which the mothers have to contend, therefore, as regards the third cause of excessive infant mortality, we have only to suggest that the workhouse authorities should put themselves into relations with the managers of the various Refuge and Rescue Societies, and, in so far as it shall prove possible, aid their efforts to reclaim and assist such mothers.

Causes 6 and 7 of excessive infant mortality—the overwork of mothers during pregnancy, and the custom, in obedience to which married women return to work immediately after the birth

of their infants, leaving them in the charge of old women, or baby sisters—we propose to meet by a law providing a simple way by which a married woman can compel her husband to support her and her children; and we rest our demand for this measure quite as much on the true interests of men as on those of women.

No State can be really prosperous, that is to say composed of well-fed, well-clothed, well-housed, well-taught, well-conducted citizens, whilst thousands of men earn only 12 to 15 shillings a week, and the full work average wages of all the women of the manual labour classes amount weekly to but 8s. 10½d.

Ignorance and poverty, the two causes of infant mortality, which we left to be considered last, lie at the root of low wages; poverty producing ignorance, and ignorance in its turn increasing poverty. But how should poverty become less whilst multitudes of children are for ever growing up in ignorance? and how is ignorance to be diminished whilst parents are too poor to give their children any instruction? The problem may seem to most men insoluble, but we do not despair of its being solved if, but for one generation, parental responsibility can be rigidly enforced; and in the proposals which we have now submitted to the public for removing or restraining the particular evils of early seduction, irresponsibility of putative fathers, overwork of mothers during pregnancy, and too early abandonment of their infants after birth, we have, in reality, shown the way in which this can be done. Once compel the fathers of illegitimate children to do their duty by them in the matter of maintenance and education, and fewer such children will be born; a fear of consequences acting as a wholesome restraint upon lawless self-indulgence. Once produce such a correspondence betwixt the number of mouths to be fed out of a man's earnings, and the amount of those earnings, as shall relieve every father from that pressure of want which seldom leaves him the desire, and still more seldom, the power to educate his children; and the question of how education is to be brought home to the masses is answered. There are, however, but two ways in which this can be done—one, to double or, in some trades, to treble the rate of wages; the other, to reduce considerably the number of the children born.

The competition engendered by the pressure of the population upon the means of subsistence renders, for the present, the former alternative impracticable; but legal and moral influences may effect the desired decrease in the numbers yearly added to the nation; and those numbers once brought down to the point at which education becomes possible, even to the children of fathers working at the present low rate of remuneration, a rise in that rate, due to a less keen competition among the candidates for employment, will be the immediate result, to be followed, in the next generation, by the far greater advance which will be the reward of a better intellectual, moral, and industrial training.

But to ensure education yielding, in the future, the good things which we believe to be in store for the English people, it is our present duty to look to it, that it be of the right kind and based upon a system which will afford to every boy and girl in the country opportunities of acquiring the highest knowledge, if only he or she proves worthy to possess it. The subject is too wide for us to enter upon its discussion here, yet we cannot refrain from just indicating a few of the measures by which we believe education might be made—what it has never been yet—a true preparation for a good and useful life. These measures are:—

I. Compulsory Education.

II. Full time attendance at school to be exacted from every child under eleven, and half time attendance from every child under fifteen.

III. A reduction in the number of hours given to the present subjects of study, and the time thus gained to be devoted to physical and industrial training.

IV. Social and political economy to occupy a chief place in the instruction given, even to very young children.³⁵

V. The establishment of a graduated school system, for all classes and both sexes; scholarships and exhibitions gained in the lower schools, giving free admittance to those of a higher grade.

³⁵ As social and political economy treat of all the facts and laws of life, no study can equal it in importance, and if well taught, none can be rendered at once simpler and more interesting. Let any one who doubts the truth of the latter part of this assertion, try giving a lesson according to the models provided in a hand-book of Social Economy, by Mr. William Ellis; and we believe that he will convince himself that children of seven or eight years of age can both understand and enjoy such teaching.

We have now brought to an end our examination into the causes of the excessive mortality prevailing among infants, by pointing out the remedies in which their repression or cure must be sought.

Whether our views will be adopted at present, must depend upon the spirit in which Parliament regards the various evils that underlie this particular form of ill; in other words, upon whether the principles, on which we have founded our investigations and proposals, do, or do not commend themselves to the reason and conscience of the men, who enjoy the high privilege of making and improving the laws of England. The final decision, however, will not rest with them, but with the people, at whose will and for whose benefit they hold their power; and to that people we, in conclusion, confidently appeal, certain that they will sanction and uphold us when we assert—

Firstly—That man is a moral being, capable of self control, and susceptible to deterrent influences :

Secondly—That the State ought not to take upon itself duties, which God and nature impose upon the individual citizen :

Thirdly—That it is true statesmanship to attack evils in their causes, and not in their results :

Fourthly—That moral and legal responsibility must correspond :

Fifthly—That the law should be so framed and administered, that none who violate its provisions shall escape its penalties.³⁶

³⁶ As, judging from the reports of the sittings of the Select Committee occupied in inquiring into the causes of Infant Mortality, furnished by the newspapers, that body seem to have restricted their researches within the very narrowest limits, we venture to suggest the appointment of a Royal Commission, composed in equal proportions of men and women, to investigate the subject in a broader and more thorough manner.

